



MCREA

Montgomery County Retired
Employees' Association, Inc.

NEWSLETTER

November 2022

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND:

**Next Year's MCREA virtual member meetings:
June 14, 2023 and October 11, 2023 (times-to-be-determined)**

**MCREA'S 2022 TWO VIRTUAL MEMBER MEETINGS WERE HELD ON
June 8, 2022 and October 12, 2022**

MCREA President's Welcome and Remarks - June 8, 2022

President Sara Harris welcomed the virtual attendees of the meetings. She thanked members for contacting the County Council Members in May to voice their concerns over the suggested inappropriate use of the retiree health trust fund. The result of this lobbying was that \$20 million dollars were not removed from the trust, but are to be used for future retirees' health costs. (See page 6 for more details.)

Sara thanked Barbara Kloc and Faye Mixon, retiring Board Members, for their service to MCREA. She reported that Board Members provided excellent services for membership, including arranging with MC's Office of Human Resources information sessions to address retirees' health and other insurance questions. (Note: these sessions are now on the 1st Thursday of the month from 3-4pm). Work is progressing on updating Officer and Board member responsibilities as well as the MCREA by-laws.

Sara also thanked Linda Herman, now the retired Director of MC's Employee Retirement Plan for her service on behalf of county employees and retirees. MCREA awarded Linda a certificate of excellence.

MCREA's Annual Business Meeting: June 8, 2022

MCREA Treasurer's Report – Christine FeintheilChristine reported that the MCREA bank balance was approximately \$50,000 and stable. The newsletter is MCREA's biggest expense. MCREA has been able to take advantage of the higher interest rates offered on federally insured certificates of deposit using the services of a long-used investment company.

MCREA Communications - Suzanne Hudson

Suzanne reported that the MCREA website (mcreaonline.com) has links to the human resources and pension offices, the newsletter archive, membership meetings' presentations as well as announcements. MCREA Facebook now has 600 followers. She encouraged retirees to visit both resources frequently.

MCREA Board Elections - Kathy Best, Vice President

Kathy requested that the membership affirm the following seven appointments to terms that expire in June 2024: Fran Abrams, Christine Feintheil, Irm Damazo, Lillian Synder, Michael Dennis, Sara Harris and Suzanne Hudson.

The following presidential appointments for 1-year terms, expiring in June 2023 were also made: Belinda Fulco, Michael Faden, and Karen Federman Henry.

The above business items were approved unanimously in an earlier meeting by the MCREA Board and at the virtual June 8th Member Meeting by the MCREA's membership.

* * *

SUMMARY of MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS' GUEST PRESENTERS -

Sara welcomed and thanked the meetings' guest presenters. Some presentation highlights are summarized below. For more details see the MCERP and MCOHR June 8th and October 12th Power Point (PPT) presentations available at MCREAonline.com.

MCERP's Presentations – Combined Summaries of June 8 and October 12, 2022

Darrin Arbaugh, Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans (MCERP) – (6/8/22)

Kevin Killeavy, Chief Investment Officer, (MCERP) – (10/12/22)

- As of 6/30/2022 the financial status of the Employee Retirement Plans (MCERP):
 - *The Employees' Retirement System (ERS) had assets of \$4.8 billion.* It included 3,330 active members and 2,626 members in the Guaranteed Retirement Income Plan (GRIP-cash balance) as well as 6,746 retirees. The estimated funded status was 102%, based on the actuarial value of assets and 100% based on the market value of assets.
 - *During the recent stock market decline, the ERS lost 3% of its value.* However, due to its investment diversification strategies, the ERS remains well funded to meet its retiree obligations.
 - The Retirement Savings Plan (RSP) had 4,396 active and inactive members and assets of \$615 million.

- The Consolidated Retiree Health Benefits Trust (CRHBT - to pay for future retirees' health benefits) had assets of **\$1.6 billion** and was **48%** funded, actuarial with a **48%** market value.
- The Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP) had assets of **\$517 million** with **3,441** active and inactive participants.
- Fidelity remains the recordkeeper for the RSP, GRIP and DCP. To change your investment elections, discuss asset allocation, or change your distribution options you may contact the local onsite representative, **Ron Seegers** at **240 777 8228**, visit any Fidelity Regional office across the U.S., or access Fidelity at fidelityonsite@montgomerycountymd.gov or <https://nb.fidelity.com/public/nb/MCG/home>.
- For more information regarding your personal retirement plan and to download forms (address change, tax withholding, etc.), Go to www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcerp, Click on *Retirees* or call 311 or 240-777-8230 and request the form(s).
- If you are refinancing your home or purchasing a new one and need an Award Letter from the ERP for your mortgage company, contact MCERP. MCERP needs 48 hours to create and send the letter stating your pension amount and that it is payable for life.

In a follow-up, Kevin Killeavy reported:

MCERP is at the final stage of hiring its new Executive Director. Hopefully, the position will be filled by the end of the year.

OHR's Presentations

Karen Bass, Health Insurance Team Manager, (MCOHR)

Some highlights of Karen's two presentations are shared below; her Power Points are posted at the MCREA website, see mcreaonline.com for more detailed information.

- MCOHR is open daily from 8 – 4 for walk-in questions.
- OHR Virtual Retiree Health Insurance Office Hours are now held the first Thursday of each month from 3 – 4 pm. Register to attend at tinyurl.com/4b229mx8
- Retirees unable to leave home to pick up medication should consider mail order for a 90-day supply. Call Caremark/SilverScript. See Important Contact Information on the last page.
- In the event of a retiree's death, their spouse will be offered the option to remain on the County's health insurance plan for the rest of his or her life.
- On January 1, 2023, the high-cost prescription plan will be discontinued. Coverage will be moved to the Standard Prescription Plan. Her chart demonstrated how retirees will save themselves, their spouses and other dependents significant amounts of money.

- Changes to health insurance rates for Calendar Year 2023 were shared. See page 9.
- Remember there is **no** Open Enrollment for Retirees. Requested changes by the 10th of the month are effective the 1st of the following month any time throughout the year. See page 9.
- By Thanksgiving OHR will mail retirees their individual 2023 insurance fact sheet including their Cost Share.
- Worth reading and understanding are Karen's remaining 5 PPT slides, (starting on page 11 of the 10/12/22 PPT presentation), that provide a tutorial on Medicare: "What is Medicare"; "When Do You Need to Apply?"; "Part B Premiums are Based on Income"; and "Medicare Part D: SilverScript and the Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA). The latter amount is deducted from your Social Security Benefit.
- OHR needs a copy of the Medicare card to properly enroll retirees and their dependents in the SilverScript prescription drug plan.

Following the presentations, Sara closed the meetings by asking meeting attendees to provide feedback via email. Although there are no current board vacancies, Sara asked anyone interested in becoming a Board member or being considered for a special project, to contact her or any Board member.

After the adjournment of the June 8, 2022 Membership Meeting, the Board met and unanimously approved the following officers of MCREA for the coming year.

2022-2023 MCREA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sara Harris – President	Beryl Feinberg
Kathy Best – Vice President	Belinda Fulco*
Suzanne Hudson -Secretary, Records Retention	Barbara Garrard
Christine Feintheil - Treasurer	Karen Federman Henry*
Fran Abrams	Margaret Knill
Charles (Chuck) Beard	Deborah Snead
Irm Damazo	Lillian Snyder
Michael Dennis	Rick Sullivan
Michael Faden*	
*Presidential Appt.	

INTRODUCTION of NEW MCREA BOARD MEMBERS

Fran Abrams worked in County Government from 1969 to 1979 starting as an Urban Planner in the Office of Planning and Capital Programming. She then became Planning Policy Coordinator for the County Council for two years before returning to the Executive Branch to become Director of Community Development. There she served as the founding president of MCGEO, the County's Employee Union. In 1976, she was promoted to Director of Department of Environmental Protection where she oversaw an agency of 350 employees and several million dollars. When Jim Gleason, County Executive decided not to run for re-election, her County Government career ended.

Fran spent the next 30 years working for and managing nonprofit organizations in Montgomery County. She has extensive experience in the management of nonprofits such as MCREA. She will be taking on the MCREA membership data base and the PayPal dues payment process. She looks forward to learning more about what retirees need and how MCREA can be helpful.

Belinda Fulco retired January 1, 2022 after 22 years of county service. She began her service in 2000 at the Office of Human Resources at the County as a Benefit Specialist on the Benefits Team working with both retirement and health & welfare benefits. She was promoted to Benefits Manager in 2006 and then in 2012 to Chief of the Health and Employee Welfare Division. In this role she was responsible for the Health Insurance Team, Employee Wellness Program, Occupational Medical Services Team and Stress Management Team. Belinda oversaw the contracts and costs for health benefits as well as the Employee Assistance and Wellness programs. During her time as HR manager and then Division Chief, Belinda worked closely with MCREA to resolve members' issues and concerns.

In 2017, Belinda began work with Housing Opportunities Commission, of Montgomery County, MD, (HOC) as the Human Resources Manager. She was responsible for Employment, Classification, Compensation, Performance Management, Health and Retirement benefits and individual employee counseling. HOC is a participating agency of the County's health and retirement plans.

Karen Federman Henry retired in 2015 after almost 30 years of service in the Office of the County Attorney, beginning as an Assistant County Attorney and finishing as a Division Chief. During her career, she handled an array of legal matters, including personnel, civil rights, land use and zoning, procurement, and appellate litigation. In addition, she advised numerous agencies within the County Government, drafted and reviewed legislation and regulations, and prepared advisory opinions. She looks forward to participating in the efforts of MCREA as a Board Member.

MCREA REPORTING:

What Is OPEB?

Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) are non-pension benefits (primarily retiree health insurance) provided by the County to qualified retirees. OPEB includes two funding components:

- Pay-as-you-go funding refers to the annual cost of group insurance benefits for current retirees. Under this funding method, the County budgets resources to pay the current year's cost of health care claims for retired employees and their dependents.
- Pre-funding sets aside assets at the time employees earn a benefit to cover cost obligations that will be paid in the future. Annual pre-funding amounts are determined by actuarial valuation. Pre-funding payments recommended by the County Executive and approved by the County Council are deposited into the Consolidated Retiree Health Benefits Trust fund (CRHBT). County agencies began pre-funding in FY08.

The CRHBT Trust Fund is shown in the Montgomery County Operating Budget, under Non-departmental Accounts, Retiree Health Benefits Trust.

Update on the Consolidated Retiree Health Benefits Trust Fund - CRHBT

In the May 2022 newsletter, we indicated that the County Executive made a policy change to the pre-funding portion of OPEB in the Recommended FY23 Budget and also removed \$20 million from the CRHBT. We communicated with the County Council in multiple ways, asking them to reverse the policy decision and restore the funds. We also asked our members to do the same. When we went to press with the spring newsletter the final FY23 budget hadn't been approved.

When the FY23 budget was finalized, we were very pleased to see that the \$20 million was not removed from the CRHBT.

A committee with representatives from the County Council and County Executive has begun to meet to update the OPEB policy. We have been assured that MCREA will be kept informed of the progress and asked for input and feedback when it would be most helpful. MCREA will continue monitoring OPEB issues.

Please note that this does NOT affect your current health insurance benefits.

MCREA MEMBERSHIP APPROVES BYLAWS REVISION

By Beryl L. Feinberg, Chair, Bylaws Committee

The MCREA members overwhelmingly approved the Bylaws revision at the October 12, 2022 meeting with a 97% approval vote and 3% abstentions. A collaborative Bylaws Committee consisting of Kathy Best, Mike Faden and Karen Federman Henry, critically examined the Bylaws to understand what was required, what the MCREA Board of Directors needed today, and how to build in some flexibility for future situations. This group found support and institutional knowledge from Fran Abrams, Barbara Garrard, Suzanne Hudson, and Margaret Knill. Everyone unselfishly shared professional expertise and volunteer experiences that improved each iteration of the Bylaws revision. My sincerest gratitude to these Board members! And, of course thank you to our President, Sara Harris, for her thoughtful review and comments.

Revisions were of three types: wordsmithing, clarifications, and significant improvements, with this report to focus on the last type. Under the responsibilities of the Board of Directors, this group determines whether to support or oppose any proposed legislation, budget, or regulation that pertains to retirement and health benefits for retirees.

Article VI, Nominations to and Election of the Board of Directors institutionalizes this year's process to incorporate the President appointing a Nominating Committee, chaired by the Vice President plus two other Board members. This Committee will present its list of proposed nominees to the Board. Article VII, Amendments to Bylaws, now states that 'Any member may propose an amendment to these Bylaws'. Furthermore, the Board may adopt, reject, further amend, or decline to act on any proposed amendment. If the Board does not act within 90 days after receiving it, the proposed amendment expires without further action. Board adopted amendments will be sent to each member for whom MCREA has a current email address. A notice printed in a newsletter at least 7 days before the meeting at which the amendment is considered will be sufficient notice.

To provide ongoing leadership and board continuity, processes for removal of Officers and Directors were updated to give the President the tools for excused absences as well as treating unexcused member absences as resignation from the Board.

Another improvement authorizes the President to appoint a volunteer with an accounting or financial management background or a CPA to conduct an annual review or audit of its financial records. The Treasurer will collaborate with those performing this task.

Processes for a Board member to designate in advance another Board member to vote for another such member deleted the previous requirement to submit in writing an explanation of the position taken.

All members are encouraged to read the Bylaws that will be posted on the MCREA website, mcreaonline.com.

Information and Resources

Montgomery County Property Tax Credit for Residents Age 65 and over and Retired Military Service Members and their Surviving Spouses.

Expedited Bill 9-22 extends the duration of the property tax credit from five to seven years for eligible county residents age 65 and older who:

- have owned and lived in the same house for at least 40 consecutive years, with a property assessment of \$650,000 or less, or
- have retired from one of the United States' Armed Forces, military reserves or national guard (Military Retiree), with a property assessment of \$500,000 or less, or
- is the surviving spouse of a military retiree 65 or older and has not remarried.

The *Application* for the credit will be updated by January, 2023 and must be submitted to the County by April 1, 2023 for the following tax year. Call 311 if you need assistance getting the updated *Application*.

For details see: tinyurl.com/4fsr9r6c

NEWS from

MONTGOMERY COUNTY EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PLANS (MCERP)

Social Security/Medicare Seminars

In 2023 the Social Security Administration (SSA) will again conduct virtual seminars for Montgomery County employees, retirees and their dependents. These are especially important for persons turning 65 years of age. Information will be provided about Social Security, Medicare, and questions answered.

The 2023 seminars are scheduled for February 28, May 11, and October 19 from 2 to 4 pm.

Sign up via this link: tinyurl.com/29eu374s

NEWS from

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES (OHR)

Changes to Insurance Rates, if any, for Calendar Year 2023

- Rates will be available on the retiree website prior to Thanksgiving
- Medical Plans:
 - Indemnity: 0%/no increase for 2023
 - CareFirst High and Standard Options: +1.7%
 - Kaiser Non-Medicare: +7.0% Kaiser Medicare: -3.1%
 - UHC: +1.7%
- Dental Plan: 0%/no increase for 2023
- Prescription Drug -Caremark Standard, High 4/8 or High 5/10: +12%
SilverScript Prescription Drug for retirees/dependents 65 and older: +12%

Remember You Can Change Your Insurance Benefits Any Time

Go to montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Benefits/RetireeHealth.html Changes received by the 10th of the month are effective the 1st day of the following month.

Scroll down to find the 2023 insurance Rates by Cost Share (multiple pages) and the Health and Life Insurance Retiree Election Form; by Thanksgiving OHR will mail retirees their individual 2023 insurance fact sheet with their Cost Share.

Complete the Form by indicating your choices, sign the Form electronically by clicking on the signature line.

If unable to electronically send the Form to OHR, use one of following methods:

In person: Use OHR Dropbox in lobby of 101 Monroe St., 7th floor, Rockville.

Fax: 240-777-5131

Encrypted Email: OHR.HIT@montgomerycountymd.gov

Mail: The Office of Human Resources, 101 Monroe St., Rockville, MD 20850

You can also call MC311 to request that the Health and Life Insurance Retiree Election Form be mailed to you.

MCREA President's End of Year Report - Sara Harris -11/2022

Communication avenues are essential for MCREA to work effectively for you! The MCREA Newsletter, website and Facebook are key information sources available to you. With that in mind, following are three MCREA items for your attention: by-laws update, member support and introductions to newly elected county officials and their staff.

First, MCREA Bylaws - your MCREA Board recently approved an update of MCREA's Bylaws, presented for member approval at the recent October Member Meeting; details are available on the website, mcreaonline.com

Second, Member Support - thanks to all of you retiree members who support MCREA volunteering help and paying dues, the sole source of income for covering costs such as the newsletter and website.

A Special Appreciation - to the Bylaws Committee Chair Beryl Feinberg, Board members Kathy Best, Mike Faden, Karen Federman Henry and to Board members Fran Abrams, Barbara Garrard, Suzanne Hudson, Margaret Knill for their commitment, guidance, institutional memory, delving into details and finally, delivering much improved set of MCREA Bylaws.

Third, Introductions - soon, Margaret Knill and I will be introducing MCREA and its mission, pensions and benefits, to our newly-elected officials. Once their terms begin on December 5, 2022, we expect to meet with Montgomery County's newly elected officials and their staff, including the two additional County Councilmembers representing Council Districts 6 and 7. Montgomery County will then have 11 Councilmembers, 7 district representatives and 4 at-large representatives.

Members, your participation and relationships with us and elected officials are vitally important to MCREA. We appreciate your efforts to keep your contact information current and your dues paid! When you do, we can contact you, ask for your help, keep you informed!

I take seriously my MCREA work for you. I appreciate your good words, your support and your offers to serve MCREA.

Take care, each one. I hope you find a moment with nature each day!

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION(Continued)

www.eyemed.com; the Discount Plan # is 1018309

Amplifon (Hearing): 1-888-784-6050 www.AmplifonUSA.com

Prudential Long-Term Care Insurance: 1-800-732-0416 www.Prudential.com

ACSIA Long Term Care Insurance: 410-455-4680 / 443-275-1764; www.MCG-LTC.com



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please **PRINT CLEARLY** or Use an Address Label

RETIREE: Last Name _____ First _____ M.I. _____

Spouse (optional): First Name _____ Last Name (if different from above) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home (_____) _____ Cell (_____) _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Thank you for your support!

MCREA holds this information in confidence. It is not shared or sold to other groups or organizations.

For additional information about annual meetings, health insurance, newsletters, helpful contact information, and much more, please visit: www.mcreaonline.com

f Find us on Facebook:
Montgomery County Retired Employees' Association, Inc.

Application is for: New Renewal

Dues are \$10.00 for 2 years per County retiree.

Enclosed are dues for:

2 years, \$10.00 4 years, \$20.00

5 years, \$25.00

Check #: _____

Date on check: _____

Please make your check payable to MCREA.

Enclose your check with this completed form and mail to:

MCREA, P.O. Box 73, Rockville, MD 20848-0073

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

MCREA: 301-929-9339; website: www.MCREAonline.com; emails: MCREAMembership@gmail.com or PresidentMCREA@gmail.com
Facebook: Montgomery County Retired Employees' Association, Inc.
Montgomery County Government MC311: 240-777-0311 or just 311 (local)
For Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans: 240-777-8230;
Fax: 301-279-1424; website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcerp
Fidelity (Deferred Compensation Plan): 1-800-343-0860 or 240-777-8228
For Group/Health Insurance: 240-773-6471 (OHR at MC311); also visit www.mc311.com or www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HIret
CareFirst Blue Cross-Blue Shield: Member Services: 1-888-417-8385 www.Carefirst.com
Kaiser Permanente: Washington Area: 301-468-6000; Baltimore Area: 1-800-777-7902
<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org>
United Healthcare: Member Services: 1-800-638-0014 www.myuhc.com
Caremark: 1-866-240-4926 www.caremark.com
SilverScript 1-866-249-6167 www.mcg.silverscript.com
See page 10 for more contact information

This newsletter is published by: Montgomery County Retired Employees' Association, Inc. P.O. Box 73, Rockville, Maryland 20848-0073. Editor: Irm Damazo. Feedback is welcomed.

MCREA

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